

MORAL ADVOCATE.

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"On Earth peace, good will towards men."

NO. 9. MOUNTPLEASANT, OHIO, THIRD MONTH. 1823. VOL. 2.

To a Military Officer of Rank.

LETTER III.

I acknowledge that the subject of War, requires to be handled with some delicacy. There are feelings, easily excited by any thing like an implication of character. My views however are not chargeable with any thing of this kind. I make all the allowance for difference of education and opinion, that the most liberal Charity will require. But after all, the subject is one of deep interest. And to no class of mankind does it involve so momentous consequences, as to those who direct the storm of war. The responsibility resting upon these, is indeed of the most awful character. During the legal dispensation, when Almighty God, in the depth of his inscrutable wisdom, saw fit to give an immediate sanction to war, this responsibility was taken off, by the access afforded to the oracle. Those concerned, could then take counsel of God himself, and receive the most unequivocal evidences of his will. And why was this august privilege granted? Was it not to hold in check the arm of violence, from approaching any but those, whom the Divine Judge had set apart for chastisement with the sword? But since the introduction of the Gospel Dispensation, since retaliation, resistance and revenge have been prohibited, and meekness, patience and nonresistance have been commanded in their place, no special privilege to make war has ever been granted. The whole responsibility now rests on those who engage in the sanguinary contest. What now is the enquiry which an officer

usually makes? Does he enquire whether the war is consistent with the divine will? (I proceed now upon the supposition that war is sometimes admissible, but I do not admit the position to be correct.) Does an officer or soldier, enquire, or is he at liberty to enquire whether the war is just or not? Is he not considered bound by the decision of the government under which he lives? If he is at liberty to judge, by the evidence in his own mind, of his liberty as a moral agent, to engage in the work of human destruction, why is he not permitted to act according to what he conscientiously believes to be right? If this is a question with which he has no right to meddle, whence did governments derive the right to assume that prerogative which belonged to the Almighty himself? The subject is one of serious magnitude, and that ought not to be superficially examined. If individuals are not to have any reference to the Divine will, in a case of so much importance as war—a case involving the property & lives of thousands & hundreds of thousands of human beings—where shall we find one in which they should? It is not merely life, liberty and happiness, but it involves the eternal destiny of all those concerned in the War. It has been well observed: "one precious immortal soul, is of more value than ten thousand perishing worlds." But admitting what the arguments assume, and it amounts at once to an admission that human authority, and those invested with that authority, perhaps the very basest of men, can at all times exercise

a repealing power over the Laws of God. "Canst thou disannul my judgments," was one of the solemn queries proposed out of the whirlwind, to Job. And who would dare to answer in the affirmative? But the idea on which the argument in question rests, goes the full length of the affirmative. To bring the subject down to more familiar illustrations, where, let me ask, is the responsibility for the outrages committed by the Turks, on the oppressed Greeks? Does it rest on the sovereign? or on his superior officers? or on the private soldiers? or on them all? Will it be pretended that the sublime Porte, by a simple order, can absolve the immediate agents from the criminality of all the outrages they have committed? Surely it cannot be supposed. And yet the Turks have a regularly organized government. But perhaps it may be said they are infidels, and of course can give no such privilege, that it belongs exclusively to *Christians*, to set men at liberty to butcher one another—The idea itself is monstrous. The christian religion does not bear the slightest feature of such a character. Is it possible to suppose, for a moment, that the life & death—the precepts and authority of Jesus Christ, confer on his followers the peculiar privilege of drenching the earth with blood—of spreading want and violence over every quarter of the globe, and sending myriads of souls, unprepared, into the regions of eternal misery? But should there be still in thy mind, a partiality for the proceedings of governments, professedly Christian, there is a familiar example at hand. We have lately been told in the public prints, that France intends to interfere in the affairs of Spain, to compel the latter to abandon her constitutional form of government. Dost thou suppose that such

an act of the French government, would absolve her officers and soldiers from all criminality in prosecuting the contest? What, let me ask, would be *thy* feelings if such an expedition were to devolve on thee? Wouldst thou think that Louis or his cabinet, could interpose between thee and Almighty God, in the day of final retribution? Wouldst thou not be impressed with the belief, that every life that should be lost in such an unworthy cause, was a distinct murder, and thyself holding a conspicuous rank among the murderers? If such would be thy feelings, and I must suppose that they would, the acknowledgment amounts simply to this; That no human authority can possibly divest a criminal act of its real turpitude; and of course, that every man must account to God for his own actions. Governments either possess the power to make War, and according to papal ideas, to grant an *indulgence* to those who engage in it, or they do not possess such a power. If they do, and what is a necessary consequence, are capable of suspending the Divine Laws, so far as concerns individual responsibility to God, for actions which he has clearly prohibited, it would indeed establish the *divine right of Kings*, and support the idea to its full extent, that those in authority "can do no wrong." But who, in this enlightened day, will possess sufficient hardihood to maintain such a doctrine? The most abject supporters of arbitrary rule, would not say so. But if it would be blasphemy to say that any human authority upon earth, possesses the power to command the Almighty into their measures, or to suspend his laws at pleasure, then we are bound to judge for ourselves, according to the light with which our Creator has been pleased to enlighten our understandings, whether we are at liberty to

take the lives of our fellow creatures or not; and we certainly ought to be at liberty to act according to the decisions of that judgment. If this liberty is not allowed, why am I to exercise my own judgment? Why am I to endeavour to make myself acquainted with the divine will? If that will is clearly revealed to me, am not I bound to observe it? And if government deprives me of the liberty to do so, is it not high treason against the sovereignty of Heaven? Does not the government put itself into direct opposition, or hostility to the Creator and Governor of the universe?

I know the maxims of human policy and military government, will tell thee that, as an officer of high standing, thou art bound to obey the voice of thy country. For if this obligation does not rest on the officer, it does not rest on the soldier, or in other words, it does not exist at all. If it does rest on thee and on us all, thou hast already seen what palpable inconsistencies, and even blasphemous consequences must ensue. And yet I know this idea does prevail. Whether it has prevailed over thy judgment or not, I cannot determine. But it is important that the principle should be examined in its whole extent, and the consequences to which it leads impartially weighed. Consider what governments *have done*, and what they *might do*, and in the calm of religious, or even rational reflection say, wouldst thou feel thyself bound to carry into effect, *any* military enterprise, which might be ordered by government? Wouldst thou be the ready instrument, in all schemes of conquest, rapine and butchery, that human depravity, invested with authority, may devise? The idea I know is abhorrent. Thou couldst with an officer formerly, return, *am I a dog that I should do this thing?* And yet if the right to

judge for ourselves exists in all, governments have certainly entered upon interdicted grounds. They have assumed what never was conferred upon them by the Supreme Legislator, even in the darkest times, for as has already been observed, when wars were permitted, before the introduction of the Gospel dispensation, it was necessary to have special reference to the oracles of God. Who now will pretend to this same authority for making war? None—none: nothing like it. We hear indeed sometimes of an appeal to “the God of battles.” But who is the God of War? Is it the same that ancient heathen nations denominated *Mars*? A character made up of an assemblage of the most horrid ideas that could be conceived—embracing all that was fierce, violent, and unrelenting: forever surrounded with the implements of destructions, and delighting in nothing but discord, human misery, and destruction? Or do they indeed mean the Prince of Peace, who declared that he came not to *destroy*, but to save men’s lives? Do they mean *that* Being, who is emphatically denominated Love? *God is Love*. Does that principle of love preside over the field of battle? Does it direct the evolutions of hostile armies, or nerve the arm to the work of human carnage? Ah! my friend, we are miserably imposed upon by the sound of words. But the idea is borrowed from heathen darkness, superstition, and I might add depravity. *They* readily supposed their deities were enlisted on their side, and even sometimes took part in the horrid fray. But what were their gods? Characters made up of every enormity and absurdity—such beings, as these, perhaps, they might, with some color of reason, suppose would enter into their quarrels, and for the sake of a few bulls or human victims, offered in

sacrifice, help them, to the last extremity. But are our ideas of a Supreme Being, to be graduated by the gross conceptions connected with the heathen mythology? Are we not prepared to admit that "the Creator of the ends of the earth," is of purer eyes than to behold eniquity with approbation, or sin with any degree of allowance, and that he views with eternal abhorrence the violence and rapine inseparably connected with a state of war?

Perhaps I may resume this subject at some future time. The subject is not easily exhausted, but lest I should exhaust thy patience, I will draw to a conclusion. &c.

REPORT

On the Penitentiary System.

(Continued from page 120.)

The Committee now come forward and advocate a change in our Penitentiary System, that will be radical and fundamental. They are fully persuaded that nothing less than solitary confinement, will ever enable us to give it a fair and full trial, in the United States. If this fails, on its full and complete adoption then the System is intrinsically defective and out of the compass of perfection. There is nothing hazarded in this remark. If it were made by every friend of the System, on both sides of the ocean, nothing would be jeopardized, for there is the strongest reason to believe, that with this improvement, a Penitentiary would prove the most effectual and salutary punishment that has ever been devised, since the origin of human government and human laws. And the Committee are happy to find this doctrine sanctioned, by most of the very instructive, and interesting letters, which follow, in the appendix to this Report.

Wherever solitary confinement has been tried, it has produced the

most powerful consequences. In the State Prison of Philadelphia, offenders of the most hardened and obdurate description—men who entered the cells assigned them, with every oath and imprecation that the fertility of the English language affords—beings, who scoffed at every idea of repentance and humility—have in a few weeks been reduced, by solitary confinement, and low diet, to a state of the deepest penitence. This may be set down as a general result of this kind of punishment, in that prison. In the New-York Penitentiary, many striking instances of penitence and submission, have also been afforded. Where prisoners were peculiarly refractory and vicious, they have been placed in solitary cells, and insulated from every human creature. Even the messengers who carried them their food, were enjoined not to utter a syllable, in discharge of their diurnal duties. The most overwhelming consequences were the result. The spirit of the offender was subdued, and a temper of meekness, and evidences of contrition, displayed. A resort to this discipline, never failed to accomplish its end.

But, it will be asked, do we recommend an entire suspension of all labour in our Penitentiaries? We answer in the negative. We are sensible that such a proposition would not meet with currency in the different states, nor do we, at present, perceive the necessity of its general adoption. But the Committee would recommend, that solitary confinement be adopted, to a far greater extent, than has heretofore been thought of in this country. They would separate this punishment into two kinds: first, solitary confinement, without hard labour; and secondly, solitary confinement, with labour. Could these two methods, in the treatment of offenders, be universally and exclusively adopted in the various Penitentiaries of this country, and all

by the trumpet's voice, as the true basis of their perennial glory, ever reached their hearts, or swayed a single action. The exceptions to this rule, and doubtless there are some, are exceedingly rare.

But how many heroes, while they have listened to the thunders of applause, bursting from a nation, telling them what sacrifices they have made, and what victories won, for the good of their country, have felt a silent conviction, sickening to their souls, while their consciences whispered, "Alas! deluded wretches, did you know the motives of my conduct as well as I know them, you would see as little cause to celebrate my actions, as I see cause to rejoice in them!" yet, so sweet, so inebriating are the strains of adulation, that they are rarely unacceptable, however false and extravagant. They are seldom repelled, though they blasphemously ascribe divine honours to the bloodiest monster on earth.

Besides a due consideration of the grand and ruling motives of fighting men, as well as of the true authors of war, the little apparent good, and the unmeasurable mass of evil, both natural and moral, which war produces;—its unequal, partial, and cruel operation; probably never affecting the person supposed to be guilty;—seldom, if ever procuring a redress of the grievances for which undertaken; suddenly sending hundreds of thousands of guilty wretches, who have no share in the controversy otherwise than as hired labourers, into a miserable eternity; and overwhelming the surviving part of a nation in unspeakable guilt, and in that way training a successive throng of victims for the shambles of the field of blood: I say, these things duly considered, there never entered the human mind a more vile and audacious imputation on the Divine character, than the supposition that, when two nations, unfortunately, as is sometimes said, get at war, Divine Justice winks at the scene; that, though there must have

been some wrong somewhere, yet as they are now both fairly engaged, it is certainly the duty of both nations to fight bravely for their own laws and customs; that God is on the whole pleased to see their patriotism and bravery; and, in fine, now gives them full permission to fight it out.

This, Sir, is the bearing which national wars hold in the minds of Christians. But, the fantastic and delusive forms by which pride and ambition thus plunge millions in misery, are loathsome in the sight of God. While there is one set of men who have objects to accomplish by setting others at war, another set, who are willing to seek renown and glory in that horrid business,—it furnishing the most abundant fuel for the flame of their passions; there is a third and very numerous class, whose vices have already excluded them from all the walks of life, except those where destruction and death have erected their standard, and claim dominion,—these are the ruthless soldiery, who are willing to kill and be killed for wages.

In the meantime, the secret movers of war see how their own purposes may be answered by a war; they issue a proclamation of war. Perhaps by a proper spirit of concession and benevolence, the difficulty could have been all removed by amicable negotiation: perhaps the proclamation does not assign the real and grand motives of the war, which the movers of it would blush to publish, and then is the whole proclamation an audacious falsehood;—or peradventure the proclamation sets forth causes wholly inadequate to the dreadful expedient resorted to.

Sir, the supposed efficacy of proclamations to legalize the slaughter of thousands, and perhaps of millions of men, as one of the steps whereby it is contended God has permitted nations to fall upon each other with relentless fury, has never been duly examined, and the amazing atrocity of

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intercourse, and all kinds of communication, among prisoners, be prevented; could they be wholly precluded from even seeing each others' faces, a new era would soon appear in the history of our criminal laws.

It appears to the Committee, that in all the cases where the convict is of a desperate character, and where his crimes are great and manifold, that his imprisonment should be spent in complete solitary confinement, free from all employment, all amusement, all pleasant objects of external contemplation. Let his diet be moderate, and suitable to a man placed in a narrow compass for the purpose of reflecting on his past life, and on the injuries which he has done to society. This would produce other effects on experienced offenders, than imprisonment, with several hundred brother villians, where free intercourse, by day and by night, is premitted:—where rich soups, and airy apartments are prepared for their reception;—and where a school for guilt, is established, where all the evil passions of man flourish in rank and poisonous luxuriance. Six months solitary confinement, in a cell, would leave a deeper remembrance of horror, on the mind of the culprit, and inspire more dread, and prove a greater safeguard against crimes, than ten years imprisonment in our Penitentiaries, as they are now managed. Who but would shudder at the bare idea of returning again to the dreary abodes of wretchedness, sorrow, and despair, in the narrow limits of a solitary cell? The memory of long and miserable days, and of sleepless and wearisome nights, once spent there, would come over the mind like the dark cloud of desolation, and terrify, and arrest the guilty, in the careers of outrage. Employment tends to destroy the effects here pointed out. It diverts the mind, calls forth a constant exertion of the physical faculties, and renders men unconscious of the lapse of time. To felons, whose minds should be broken

on the rack and the wheel, instead of their bodies, and who can only have their obstinate and guilty principles crushed and destroyed, by severe treatment; no kind of labour should be given, while it is intended that solitude, complete and entire solitude, should be left to do its effectual work. Sooner or later, this mode of punishment will be adopted in the United States. It is founded on sound principles of philosophy, applicable to the nature of the human species. The term solitary confinement, without labour, will be defined in our statute books for specific offences, and enter into the sentence of our criminal tribunals. Wherever it has been tried, it has been tried with success, in this country. No time should be lost in giving it a more full, ample, and satisfactory experiment. "Man is a social being" says Governor Adair, in his last speech to the Legislature of Kentucky: "The intercourse of his fellow man is essential to his happiness, and necessary, for the expansion of those noble faculties, which distinguish him above all other animals. Unbroken solitude is the grave of his genius and his joys. Virtue herself wanders with melancholy aspect in the regions of exile, and sinks, with despairing anguish, amid the gloom of that dungeon, from which she is never to emerge. But absolute and compulsory solitude, when adopted as a punishment, and inflicted for a season only, has been found productive of the most beneficial results. It is the inquisition of the soul, and the tyrant of every vice. It may be regarded as scarcely possible that the guilty prisoner can long inhabit a cell where darkness and silence reign, undisturbed arbiters of his doom, without some relenting of purpose, some real penitence of heart. The moral faculty regains its lost dominion in his breast, and its solemn responses are regarded as oracular. He acquiesces with abated resentment in

the justice of the sentence by which he suffers. That audacious spirit of resistance to the established order of society, which drove him to the commission of every outrage, gives place to the mortifying sense of his weakness and dependence; and he ardently desires, as the first of blessings, a return to that very society from which his crimes have banished him. Hence originates a disposition fitted for the reception of moral and religious instruction—a conformity to the requisition of his present condition—a spirit of active industry, emulation and amendment, the means of present favour, and future restoration; and all the benefits which are consequent on regular habits and amended morals."

The other kind of solitary confinement might be designated for the most hardened felons, after they had passed through a sufficient course of discipline in solitude, without labour. Their first relief should be the application of their time to that sober industry, which they had discarded, for the devices of guilt & the commission of crimes, before their sentence to the Penitentiary. It would also be proper, for another class of criminals, of a lower grade, who might be doomed to solitary imprisonment and hard labour in the first instance. It is believed, by the Committee; that the punishment would be found severe, salutary and effective. A long period of solitary confinement, without any labour would have an unfavourable effect on the future ability of the convict to be useful in his peculiar pursuits. His mechanical capacity might be impaired by long inertness. But when solitude and labour could be combined, consistently with the design of punishment, the execution of the law would not give cause of objection to those who look at our State Prisons, more with a view to loss and gain, in point of revenue, than to any thing else. It is contended that solitary confinement here

spoken of, would be suitable to all crimes of a secondary degree, and that it would tend to prevent offences in two ways. It would have a lasting and powerful effect on the mind of the offender himself. If the reform of convicts is within the reach of any human laws, we might expect it here. It would also prove a restraining cause in the evil hour of temptation, when its bitter consequences were recollected. It would also accomplish much, by the means of example, if example can ever hold in terror over the vicious and profligate.

Much confidence is cherished, that if these two grand methods of punishment, could be rigidly enforced, in our Penitentiaries and no other adopted, that a more efficient and salutary criminal code would be exhibited, in the United States, than has been seen in any other country. The term of imprisonment might be much shorter than it is now. Instead of ten and fifteen years, it could be reduced to less than half the number and so throughout the whole statute book, on the same principle of reduction. (To be Continued.)

From Poulson's Am. Daily Advertiser.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman of this city dated,

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Dec. 30, 1822.

On my arrival here, I found the best and most commercial part of the town, a heap of smoking ruins. We find it most agreeable to live on board, as all the hotels and houses near the water have been consumed. For two or three days past, there has been a strong, disagreeable land breeze, and we have been covered with lime, dust and ashes, from the ruins of the town. It is at present rather sickly, and we not unfrequently hoist our colours half mast, for officers in the harbour. I have several times seen Madame Dessalines—she is a tall, portly, well informed black woman, and

very polite—if she was white she would with us, be termed elegant and majestic. She was formerly Empress of this Island, and Madame though she does not now live in the splendour and elegance to which she was accustomed when Empress, is still wealthy and very charitable. She saved the lives of many white persons, but said it was of little use to save the individual, without giving wherewithal to live on afterwards, which it was her general practice to do. She once gave an English lady, who lost her husband at the Cape, and was in distress, ten thousand dollars.

The foregoing article is inserted to present a laudable example among a-despised people. Virtue and nobility of mind have very little to do with the colour of the skin. Examples of this kind among the blacks, ought to abate that strong prejudice which is indulged against the African descendants. Indeed the Example of St. Domingo is developing the most conclusive proofs that if these people are not prepared for the enjoyment of liberty, the fault is all our own. It lies in the degradation in which they are held by the whites.

The idea that the blacks in the United States, are not prepared for the enjoyment of freedom, and therefore must not be admitted to it, is both cruel and unsupported by correct reasoning. The degradation with which they are charged, so far as it exists, is entirely dependent on the abridgement of their rights, and that general system of oppression exercised over them by the whites. To continue the causes then, till the natural consequences of those causes shall cease, is simply to perpetuate the wrongs which *we* are heaping upon them. The degradation with all its consequences must be charged on

those who have control of its causes— & cannot be expected to be removed in the present state of things. Restore them to their most essential rights—place them in a situation to enjoy the blessings of society—Let them feel that they are integral parts of the community and interested in its general prosperity, and the degradation under which they are now doomed to misery, will soon cease to exist.

Unless we can bring ourselves to disbelieve in the existence of a Supreme Being, or believing in his being, deny his attributes—his Justice, and his Providence, and suppose that he regards the actions of men with perfect indifference; we cannot suppose that the real interest, safety and happiness of mankind could be promoted by a violation of the immutable laws of justice. The very fundamental principles of morality, which involve the relations between man and man, as well as those which form the foundation of civil society, are violated in the system of slavery—and this never can be *safe* wether we regard the consequences in a natural and political point of view, or consider the subject, in connection with the character of man, as a being accountable in another state of existence for his actions in this.

Extracts from Letters to Caleb Strong.

Who dare affirm that the soldier, marching to battle does not go with far more turpitude of intention than the midnight assassin? His intention is to kill as many as possible. And what are his motives?—These men at whom he levels his murderous weapons, have never injured him; he has no quarrel with them; and as to the cause in which he fights, he neither has the means of knowing, nor the

capacity of judging, of its equity. He only knows that they belong to the army of the nation with whom his own nation is at war. Perhaps he is a mercenary, and at all events, the motive of the great body of soldiers is merely their pay, while that of their officers is the love of fame and glory and the hope of promotion. *Arms, Sir, is a profession*; and I appeal to every man's own conscience, who follows that profession, whether the service of his country is not the least and the last of all his real motives of action. It will do to emblazon his epitaph, but it never warms his heart.

While with these motives the soldier rushes to the bloody conflict, with his arms nerved and his heart steeled to the horrid work of death, he knows well at what hazard he goes, he deliberately encounters the dreadful danger of being sent before the awful throne of judgment. Brutal courage may enable a man to despise the pains of death; but what sort of courage is that which can embolden a sinner to rush into the presence of his final Judge, from the rage of battle, when he has no reason to hope for the Divine favour? If it be not the height of madness, I do not know what is reason.

With infinite hazard he plunges into battle, meets an infatuated wretch like himself, who falls before him, closes forever his probationary state, and sinks down to endless torments. He kills perhaps another and another; and the more he kills, the more he is applauded, even by *pious Christians*; at length *he falls himself*, venting horrible oaths and wild execrations, indulging all the furious and bloody passions, and rushes up to Judgment, before the serene and dreadful presence of Him, who has declared, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord. What shield is there to cover his enormous vileness? Will the Saviour own him as a disciple? Perhaps his last words were blasphemy against the Saviour.

Ah, Sir, you will not dissent from my opinion when I say, that Heaven's all pure and holy mansions are seldom gained from the field of battle. You know too well the ineffable atrocity that marks the abode and the progress of armies. The meagre barriers of martial law form all the restraint generally known both by officers and soldiers. They deride the sabbath—they mock at chastity—a perpetual roar of profanity ascends to heaven: even the barriers of martial law are boldly thrown down in relation to *life*, and a military man must accept a challenge, on however slight occasion given, and must murder if he can, or be killed as he may: they burn for plunder, rapine, revenge; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways.

Sir, what amazing and unmeasurable guilt brands the character of Christian nations, nay of Churches; who, notwithstanding all these known facts, yet throw a cloak over their armies, and say, "there may be some irregularities in a camp, indeed, but the soldiers were brave fellows, they fought well, and died in a good cause, leaving the incautious mind to make an involuntary and inevitable transition to the idea, that *they fell in a cause which will be their passport to heaven*. Mahomet artfully wove it into his scheme, that every mussulman who fell bravely fighting in his armies and under his orders, went instantly to a paradise of sensual pleasures. He did not do things by the halves. But, Sir, the Christian nations, without the open avowal of Mahomet, do not fail to avail themselves of the same principle. The almost apotheosis of their heroes; their praises of those who fall in battle, their prayers, hymns, illuminations, and solemn festivals for the dead, give a tone to the public, which would accuse any one of great audacity, were he even to call in question their future felicity; and, in fact, to induce some even to envy their fall. Yet after all, not a single one of those motives, so proudly graven on monumental marble, or propagated

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This, Sir, is the bearing which national wars hold in the minds of Christians. But, the fantastic and delusive forms by which pride and ambition thus plunge millions in misery, are loathsome in the sight of God. While there is one set of men who have objects to accomplish by setting others at war, another set, who are willing to seek renown and glory in that horrid business,—it furnishing the most abundant fuel for the flame of their passions; there is a third and very numerous class, whose vices have already excluded them from all the walks of life, except those where destruction and death have erected their standard, and claim dominion,—these are the ruthless soldiery, who are willing to kill and be killed for wages.

In the meantime, the secret movers of war see how their own purposes may be answered by a war; they issue a proclamation of war. Perhaps by a proper spirit of concession and benevolence, the difficulty could have been all removed by amicable negotiation: perhaps the proclamation does not assign the real and grand motives of the war, which the movers of it would blush to publish, and then is the whole proclamation an audacious falsehood;—or peradventure the proclamation sets forth causes wholly inadequate to the dreadful expedient resorted to.

Sir, the supposed efficacy of proclamations to legalize the slaughter of thousands, and perhaps of millions of men, as one of the steps whereby it is contended God has permitted nations to fall upon each other with relentless fury, has never been duly examined, and the amazing atrocity of

the principles it involves thoroughly exposed. An object so enormous—so hideous in its features—so diabolical in its nature, so dreadful in its effects, could not escape the notice of any one who took the most cursory survey of this subject; but it has only shared a glance of the eye and perhaps a dash of the pen. These proclamations are generally considered of omnipotent force to level all objections to the equity of war; they quiet the conscience, and reconcile the most pious, scrupulous, and zealous Christian to any war, though ever so apparently wicked and unjust; or he says, "True, indeed, I do not believe the war is either just or politic, but my government has proclaimed war, and if unjustly, it is their concern, not mine; I have nothing to do but to fight for my own nation and country;" and thus it is rashly presumed that the sanction of the God of the universe, by a mere diplomatic trick or falsehood, is extorted to cover all the cruelty, murder, and wickedness that shall follow, merely because it is an act of government and therefore legal. But, this shall be the subject of the following letter.

In the meantime, suffer me to say, that, in relation to war between nations, what God has not commanded he has not permitted; and those governments and nations who have rushed into this bloody work so frequently, and with much confidence in the Divine permission, have already received, or have still to receive, a dreadful retribution from him who has said, "Thou shalt not kill: He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword."

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

For the Moral Advocate.

Review.

On looking over a file of the Weekly Register this morning, I happened to cast my eyes on the following paragraph which appeared as an editorial article, "Oct. 12th, 1822.

"SLAVERY. One great good, at least,

will grow out of the revolution in Mexico, Colombia, &c. for slavery is abolished in all of them—and, after a few years, the road to honor, respectability and wealth, being open to all—distinctions, on account of color will be lost, and the whole mass of society have one common interest and feeling. Let the future fate of these countries be what it may, *personal slavery cannot be restored*. Much alarm prevails in Louisiana in consequence of the flight of slaves to Mexico. See [Register] page 96"

Not finding the information I was in search of, I took up the no. dated "Sep. 14, 1822." On the first page of which another editorial article struck my attention. It was headed "The great curse of our land," and was introduced with an extract from "the Edinburgh Scotsman," saying, among other things, that slavery in the U. S. was "the misfortune of America, but the crime of Britain." The editor, after passing some encomiums on the "just and liberal remarks of the Scotsman" goes on to say: "It is an easy thing to rail against slavery, and those who inhabit countries or districts where there are none or very few blacks, may indulge themselves with schemes of emancipation, but, until some way is provided to remove them out of the country, or overcome the prejudices against color, every attempt of the kind must be ineffectual. Without one or the other of these, a general liberation would be almost as productive of injury to the public welfare as a general insurrection."

The article occupies about three and a half closely printed columns of the Register. In the course of which the editor proceeds on the apparent design to prove, that emancipation would be as bad as an insurrection—that the prejudices against the blacks are not to be expected to be removed—that they "cannot escape from their cast" but must remain degraded beings—and that as such, indulgence eminently increases the danger to be apprehended from them. Referring to the plot at Charleston, he remarks: "It is thought that some severe laws will be passed for the preservation of the whites; and to guard against such attempts in future. The system of slavery involves in itself a state of dreadful severity, for it is sus-

tained only by force—and about 60 years ago thirteen blacks were burnt alive in the then colony of New York, for insurrectionary movements. Sanguinary punishment always has been, and ever will be the attendant of slavery every where. We neither approve of the one nor the other—but all we can do is to disapprove of them.”

Thus, whatever was his intention, he has clearly put the most shocking severities of law and usage as the *misfortune*, not the crime of the whites—and even making it a matter of duty to treat the slaves with cruelty in self defence (which is supposed to justify any thing,) because those who are treated best, are most to be dreaded.

If any thing is calculated to rivet the fetters of the slave, and make his situation more desperately intolerable than it is, such sentiments as these are the means by which those effects are to be produced.

He does indeed contend that the slaves have a *right* to regain their liberty by fire and sword—by the slaughter of every one that may oppose them, even to the amount of tens of thousands of persons. But this is as wrong in principle as it is in policy. What ideas can the writer have of the moral government of the world, to suppose that such a state of things can exist without criminality? We are here presented with the strange phenomenon of a system of force, in which the parties are at liberty to wage a war of extermination, and both be innocent! When the truth is, that those who exercise the force, are highly criminal, and if both resort to it, they are both criminal, in the sight of that overruling Providence who does not admit the plea of necessity for the commission of crime. He has assured us his protecting care is over all his works—that a sparrow falls not to the ground without his permission, and that even the grass of the field is not beneath his notice. Under such parental care, of a Being, in whom is combined Omnipotence, Omniscience and every other excellence, there surely never can exist such a state of things, as to enable us to justify the most outrageous acts of wickedness, on the plea of necessity.

The article before us, whatever was

its real object, is no doubt a very acceptable “peace offering” to slave holders, for though it is interspersed with some excellent remark, goes completely to justify the practice of holding slaves—and indeed every cruelty that may be inflicted upon them.

It is to be extremely regretted that a writer so cogent and influential as H. Niles, and esteemed withal as the zealous friend of liberty, should have turned the point of his pen against the free negroes *en masse*. Indeed I think it an injury to the cause of humanity, and to an already deeply injured people, of which the writer would hardly have been the instrument, if he had duly considered the case. He says:—“The worst persons among us in Baltimore are the free blacks, a lazy, idle, perfidious body—standing in the way of the white laboring classes, male and female, and depreciating such laborers by their ignorance, impudence, and power of numbers”—with more to the same effect. It is just such declarations as these that places the free negroes in the *cast* he says so much about, and makes that cast so odious. It is these very sentiments, repeated by men of influence, that has given the public opinion that retrograde movement which it has made in relation to liberty. And it is this, and this only that makes the unhappy negro a being “to whom hope never comes.”

The natural order of causes and consequences would dictate an admission of the black population to the enjoyment of their most essential rights, in the first place—this would produce an improvement in their moral condition, because their present degradation is the consequence of the privation of those rights.—An improvement in their moral condition would abate the prejudice that stamps them as an odious cast, till finally, if men of influence would do their duty, that prejudice would become extinct. Thus proceeding on the most plain and obvious principles of moral and political right, the whole subject would be perfectly manageable, and safety and happiness be the result to both parties.

But men, when they leave the simple principles of nature, or nature's Author, and set about building castles in the air,

are quite as apt to begin at the wrong end as the right one.—And thus it is in the case before us. We wait for the prejudices to be removed, while we are effectually working to strengthen them. We wait for the moral and intellectual condition of the blacks to be improved, while we continue in full force, the very causes by which their degradation is produced!

The first article quoted from the Register, and which was published about a month after the other, appears to have been written under the influence of very different feelings & perhaps sentiments. No alarm seems to have been excited for the fate of Mexico and Colombia. Nothing like calamities equal to a general insurrection was suggested. They had not waited for some imaginary scheme to be planned which could never be carried into execution, for the removal of the blacks—but they simply declared them free, and H. Niles declared it a great good deed. A comparison of the two cases is rather humbling to the pride of the U. States. It completely proves two things. First, that we are vastly inferior to the South Americans in point of Republican principles, and disinterested virtue. In the next place it proves that our great men, even when they come out as the champions of liberty, are warped in their judgments by little pitiful local feelings and interests.—And I might have added a third thing that it proves—It proves that the monstrous difficulty and danger of emancipation is the phantom of the brains of those who seem to be so alarmed at it. The difficulty all grows out of the very same principles and motives which first originated this miserable policy. It originates there, & men who are honest in their intentions catch the infection.

If ever there was a nation upon earth, whose interest it was to give free circulation to the principles of *peace*, that nation is the United States. The doctrines of Peace, and the inexpediency as well as criminality of slavery, ought to be diffused with unremitting zeal. They are kindred principles, and ought to go hand in hand. They prompt us continually to look up to the Supreme Source of Excellence—they lead us to

rely on his protecting Providence; and relying on this Providence, we are not urged to acts of rashness or wickedness to obtain our rights or preserve our existence. The unlawfulness of war is a doctrine as binding on the slaves as on their master. Neither the plea of necessity, nor the flagrant violation of their rights can justify them in a resort to force, for the redress of wrongs. The slavery of the Israelites in Egypt, bore no slight resemblance to the case of the African descendants in the U. S. The latter, it is true, in *some* respects, involves more sufferings; particularly in the separation of the nearest relatives, by the internal *slave trade*, which did not take place in Egypt. But even in that early day & with that favored people, the abridgement of rights did not justify a resort to force on their part. Not that the pretensions of their oppressors were entitled to respect, but the injustice and guilt of the one did not justify the other in taking the redress of their wrongs into their own hands. Their duty was in patience, and a reliance on that Almighty Power who is able to overrule the determinations of men, and defeat their purposes, by means beyond the views and comprehension of finite creatures. To draw a parallel between the case of the negroes, and the crew of the Philadelphia,* to show the right of the former to obtain their freedom, at all hazards, is not correct reasoning, because it is reasoning on false premises. Neither the slaves of the U. S. nor of Tripoli have this right. Justice on the one hand, and nonresistance on the other, are duties which the Gospel renders imperative, and unconditional. And in case of violence on either hand, let it be remembered that God has declared "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Should the slaves attempt to exercise this prerogative of the Almighty, by pouring out vengeance on their oppressors, and executing what they may suppose are his judgments, I have no doubt but *they* would have to drink deeply of those judgments themselves. But what of this? are the masters therefore secure? Far from it. The vial of Divine Wrath, may burst upon them even in the "stillness of noontide," and in a form as unexpected as any of the

plagues of Egypt. Thus I would protest against the idea that the slaves have a right to obtain their freedom by violence. But at the same time I deny the right of their masters to hold them, much less to resort to extreme severities to keep them in that condition, and therefore I contended that slavery involves much more of crime than misfortune.

As reference was made to the affair of Charleston I will take this occasion to express some doubts which have always attended my mind, as to the *reality* of the plot, for which so many blacks were executed. It cannot have escaped the notice of those who have read the statements that have been given of the business, that the evidence was obtained under circumstances which at least render it doubtful. We know that the *dread* of punishment, and the hope of escaping that punishment, have often produced testimony seemingly plausible, yet totally destitute of foundation. Even Witchcraft has often been proved by testimony as clear, and as much intitled to credit, as that on which the convictions at Charleston were founded. There have been cases of prosecutions for witchcraft (now exploded from the statute books of all civilized nations,) in which the nearest relatives of the accused have sustained the prosecution, and even the parties themselves have acknowledged the offence, and suffered the most dreadful death without receding from the confession. But can we suppose that in an insurrection so formidable in its character, and deliberately matured almost to the moment of execution, there should have been no preparation of weapons, except 13 hoop poles? Nothing but the apprehension, and extreme dread of such a catastrophe, could give the least plausibility to such an account. Young says:

"What ardently we hope, we soon believe,"

But our belief is as much under the control of our *fears*, as our *hopes*.

But whether the insurrection at Charleston had any other foundation than *fear*, as to the evidence by which it was supported, will perhaps remain a secret to us all. But still on this occasion, many lives were taken, and much sanc-

tion given to public and private severity, even against those whose innocence was not so much as called in question!

I wish—I sincerely wish, that H. Niles may be sensible of the influence which he possesses, and the capacity to serve the cause of humanity. And that when he writes on this subject, he may remember that his remarks are generally made in a very striking manner. When he takes up the dogmas of slave holders upon trust, or on a superficial examination, and gives them the sanction of his sentiments, and the point of his manner, it is calculated to do a great deal of injury, to an already injured people, to whose sufferings I am sure he is not insensible. A.

For the Moral Advocate.

WAR has never existed in the Christian Church.

(Continued from page 56.)

I am aware of the impatience of many, and of their enquiry, What does this writer mean? I would briefly reply, that having as I apprehend, learned in the school of Christ the excellence of patience, I am willing patiently to follow the subject as it may from time to time be opened to view. The impatience of the human mind, often, very often, interposes a barrier against the knowledge of the power of truth. Said the Apostle, "Great is the mystery of godliness." Again: "Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It affords melancholy reflection, that a great part of professing christians, because they cannot understand, or comprehend it, at a single glance, denounce the pursuit of it. They are willing, and perhaps wishing, to suppose that it is a state wholly unattainable in this life. This rejection results from the impatience of the natural mind, and its alienation from the divine life. There is no way or manner of removing the latter, or attaining assimilation to the divine principle of purity, holiness,

and godliness; on which, salvation depends, but through a patient and watchful waiting for Him "that openeth, and no man shuteth; and shuteth, and no man openeth." The researches of human wisdom fall infinitely short of it; for which the blessed Saviour expressed his thankfulness. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." But alas! The present state of the world evinces a reversal of these, in the estimation of men, or rather, that there is no revelation of them. Indeed, the various systems of ecclesiastical government, and the concerns of their churches, are founded on the negative conclusion. And it is worthy of serious consideration, that those who claim to be the "wise and prudent" of this world, are the advocates for war, denying revelation: while those who, in child-like simplicity, are depending on the protection of their heavenly Father, have full confidence in the revelation of the Divine Mind in relation to the salvation of the soul, and the heavenly kingdom. I am convinced that there cannot be found in all christendom an advocate for war, that will admit immediate revelation; nor one that bears a conscientious testimony against war, that does not believe in it. Not the spirit of prophecy, but that inspiration which is frequently spoken of in the scriptures, as the only sure guide through this pilgrimage state. This is easily explained: there cannot exist a unity between "the only living and true God," being a God of perfect purity, and that spirit which approves of war; but on the restoration of his image in the soul, a living unity is felt, and instruction as convincing as an audible voice, is impressed upon the mind. The apostle when illustrating the christian covenant, adverts to the predictions of the prophet. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:

and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, & every man his brother, saying, know ye the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." The testimony of the same apostle is of similar import. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness, and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

The parable of the "sower" plainly informs us why so few become subject to those *laws*, and this *grace*; (certainly the holy spirit.) The *strong ground* and the *good ground* are emblematic of the different conditions of the hearts of men. The *fowls* were said to have "devoured" the seed that fell by the "way side." I apprehend there is no case in which this is more emphatically true, than when through the tendering influence of the heavenly spirit, the feelings are in some measure wrought into a state of repugnance to war; and the fowls or those who would prevent its taking root from sinister motives, devour it. The figure is very appropriate to those who are high and airy in the profession of the Christian name; and yet endeavour to obviate every objection, and remove all the tender and conscientious scruples against war. We know assuredly that this course has been pursued, not only by civil governments, but by very many of those who call themselves the ministers of the gospel. We may profitably admit the supposition and enquire; If all those in whose hearts the seed of the heavenly kingdom has been thus sown, had been duly encouraged to co-operate with it,—indeed to treat it as the germ of immortal life; how great would have been the difference in the present period of the world? I have no doubt that more than half of the people in christendom would by this time have been brought into obedience to the non-resisting spirit of the gospel: and the way would have

been open and made easy for the conversion of the other parts of the world. This would have been literally complying with the excellent advice of the Saviour: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." How futile the pretence, that we love the idolatrous nations with christian love, while as fully prepared for war, and engage in it, on the same principles!—Continuing the parable; "Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had not root, they withered away." Notice the exposition. "For when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." The seed of the kingdom may be considered as the *cause*; its operation, leavening the whole into its own nature, as the *effect*; and "tribulation or persecution" from those who are strangers to it, as the immediate *consequence*. In every instance, in which this *seed*, or the principle of the kingdom of heaven, is rejected through fear of temporal suffering, of tribulation or persecution; we have an illustration of this subject. Also, "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." But he that received seed into good ground, is he that receiveth the word and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty." These are not "hearers of the word only," but *doers* of it: practically exemplifying the faith and love, of the renovated, children of their Heavenly Father: "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

In the apostacy, the government of the church was assumed by men, in order to adapt it to their own sec-

ular views; not as having been relinquished by its Divine Head, or by mutual assent to a transfer; but because they would not have Him to reign in and over them. Until then, it had been subject to the Holy Spirit; to the dominion of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These ——— have ever acted in perfect unity. In the writings of John, he says; "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." The blessed Saviour said to his disciples, and I have no doubt of its being verified in the experience of all his faithful followers; "If ye love me keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless. "I will come to you." "If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." These are all represented as feeling deeply interested in the salvation of a fallen world. But in that deplorable apostacy, a spirit inimical to happiness suggested a division of them. The nominal church, falling into a condition similar to that of the Jewish nation under its idolatrous kings, practically declared that God had forsaken the earth. The next point to settle, was, since Christ has ascended into heaven; Who shall govern the church? A man, was designated by men, and publicly declared to be *Christ's vicegerent on earth*. The last, and most difficult to dispose of, was the *Holy Spirit*; since

there are so many emphatical testimonies to the necessity of subjection to it: and it was known to have sustained and governed the church, while remaining in her pristine purity. It had been the primary rule; the instructor and protector of the church; the Alpha and Omega; and with humble and reverential dependence upon it, the members only moved in its strength, and under its direction. But, in that lapsed state, they seem to have found no way to dispose of this unwelcome messenger from heaven, consistently with the indulgence of their desires, without totally discarding it. They were indeed full in verbal acknowledgments, but practically denied it, in their concerns. Those christian graces of meekness, humility, and heavenly love, could not be endured by those proud and aspiring generations; who grew darker and darker, as they receded from the government of the Divine Spirit. At length, *human will* became the primary rule, which, like a deluge swept away the foundation of the church.

Multitudes of people, who are acquainted with the New Testament records of the primitive church, and with the present state of the nominal churches, are wondering why there should be such an astonishing difference. The cause of this is within the comprehension of every intelligent person, since it is clearly obvious to every one that reads them attentively, that the primitive christians were actuated and governed by the Divine Spirit; and we know that in its operations throughout the universe, harmony is produced and preserved; and that in its operations on the minds of mankind, it draws into a heavenly unity and saves into its own nature, or assimilates to itself. On the other hand, we know that the human will, if not subject to it, has been a source of discord ever since the creation. Thus, the "flock" wandering away from the "true shepherd," became an easy prey to the "adversary" acting in the human will. But to render it more plain: It is admitted that the Holy Spirit was in reality, the counsellor, guide, preserver and protec-

tor of the primitive church. Now look at modern christendom!!! What a deplorable defection!!! In vain do ye look for substitutes for the *un-created*, amongst the scribes of the world!

(To be continued)

JUSTIN.

Those who hold the proposals last issued are requested to return them as soon as convenient, as the 1st vol. will not be put to the press till some idea can be formed of the number that will be wanted.

It has been suggested by some persons, friendly to the Moral Advocate, that the price proposed for the first vol. (bound,) considered as a *book*, is too high. But this idea will be corrected when it is understood that the volume is to be reprinted through all the numbers, and the edition is not expected to be as large as is usual in printing *Books*.

The delay which is unavoidable in waiting for the return of subscriptions, the labor and attention necessary to carry on the current vol. together with the other business of my office, will put it out of my power to furnish subscribers with the reprinted vol. sooner than some time in the summer.

It seems necessary once in a while to remark that postages are a heavy item of expense to a printer, when the *rules* are not rigidly observed. When in more private life, I have frequently received letters, and never thought the expense burdensome. But in my present situation, I at least *feel* it.

Suppose for instance that an individual, pleased with the Moral Advocate, subscribes for it, and sends me his name by mail. Surely I cannot complain of a postage, when it brings a subscriber. That postage perhaps may be 25 cents. Very well—some months after, the subscriber remits the money—this is still better than the letter—but now the letter is double, and if from a distance—will be 50 cents postage; which added to the first, will be 75 cents expense, and leaves 25 cents as compensation for one year's papers.

